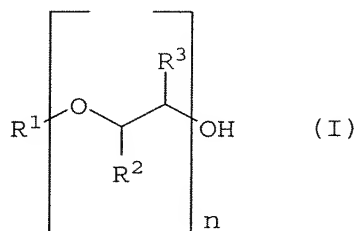


IN THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently amended) Polymeric particles capable of absorbing blood and/or body fluids comprising
- a) at least one interpolymerized ethylenically unsaturated acid-functional monomer,
 - b) at least one interpolymerized crosslinker,
 - c) optionally one or more interpolymerized ethylenically and/or allylically unsaturated monomers copolymerizable with a),
 - d) optionally one or more water-soluble polymers onto which said monomers a), b), and optionally c) are at least partially grafted, and
 - e) optionally one or more reacted postcrosslinkers,
- wherein said polymeric particles are coated with at least one surfactant and with at least one solvent of the general formula (I)



wherein

R¹ is C₁-C₆-alkyl with or without halogen substitution,

R² and R³ are independently hydrogen or methyl, and

n is an integer from 0 1 to 5.

2. (Previously presented) The polymeric particles of claim 1 wherein the surfactant is a nonionic surfactant having an HLB value in the range from 2 to 18.

3. (Previously presented) The polymeric particles of claim 1 wherein the solvent is a compound of the general formula (I) wherein

R¹ is C₂-C₆-alkyl,

R² and R³ are each hydrogen, and

n is an integer from 1 to 3.

4. (Previously presented) The polymeric particles of claim 1 that are further coated with at least one multivalent metal cation.

5. (Previously presented) The polymeric particles of claim 4 wherein the multivalent metal cation is an aluminum cation.

6. (Previously presented) The polymeric particles of claim 1 characterized by a blood absorbance of at least 15 g/g in the dry state.

7. (Previously presented) The polymeric particles of claim 1 that are free of postcrosslinking.

8. (Previously presented) A mixture of polymeric particles of claim 1 wherein not less than 20% by weight of said polymeric particles are free of postcrosslinking.

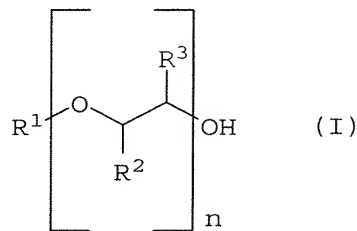
9. (Withdrawn) A process for producing polymeric particles capable of absorbing blood and/or body fluids by an addition polymerization of a mixture of

- at least one ethylenically unsaturated acid-functional monomer wherein each is optionally at least partially neutralized,
- at least one crosslinker,
- optionally one or more ethylenically and/or allylically unsaturated monomers copolymerizable with a),
- optionally one or more water-soluble polymers onto which said monomers, a), b), and optionally c) may be at least partially grafted,

the base polymer obtained being dried, classified and

- optionally after treated with one or more postcrosslinkers and dried,

which comprises the dried polymeric particles being aftertreated with at least one surfactant and with at least one solvent of the general formula (I)



wherein

R¹ is C₁-C₆-alkyl with or without halogen substitution,
R² and R³ are independently hydrogen, methyl or ethyl, and
n is an integer from 0 to 20.

10. (Withdrawn) The process of claim 9 wherein said dried polymeric particles are aftertreated with a solution containing at least one multivalent metal cation.

11. (Withdrawn) The process of claim 9 wherein the dried base polymer is classified such that the polymeric particles are less than 500 μm in particle size.

12. (Withdrawn) The process of claim 9 wherein a solution of said surfactant in said solvent is sprayed onto said polymeric particles.

13. (Withdrawn) The process of claim 9 wherein an aqueous solution comprising a multivalent metal cation is sprayed onto said polymeric particles.

14. (Cancelled)

15. (Withdrawn) A hygiene article comprising polymeric particles of claim 1 .

16. (New) The polymeric particles of claim 4 wherein the polymeric particles are coated with a solution of the at least one multivalent metal cation.